

## HOMER ILIAD: MAIN CHARACTERS

### GREEKS (OR PEOPLE IN THE GREEK CAMP)

**Achilles:** Son of Peleus, the greatest warrior of the Greeks, known for his leadership in council as well as on the battlefield. Also the youngest warrior, and the only of the kings who was there by choice rather than because he had sworn an oath to uphold the marital rights of Helen's husband.

**Agamemnon:** Leader of the Greek army, though since the Greeks were a collection of individual kings, it's a very loose sort of leadership. He is Menelaus' brother and leads the Greeks because of this, but also because the magnificence of his kingdom makes him more worthy than anyone else. But he makes a number of errors that show he is not all that adept at leading this sort of band of men.

**Ajax:** The greatest warrior after Achilles, rock-steady, and oriented to honor, comradeship, and the morale and safety of his fellow warriors.

**Briseis:** Achilles' war captive and concubine, for whom he expresses love (sometimes).

**Menelaus:** The husband of Helen; it was her kidnapping from him by Paris that began the war.

**Odysseus:** The smartest of the Greek warriors, in terms of being able to assess and persuade (he came up with the idea of the Trojan horse). He's also the hero of the Odyssey)

**Patroclus:** Achilles' closest companion, popular among the other Greeks from kings and warriors to slave women.

**Phoenix:** Achilles' old tutor, who accompanied him to Troy.

**Achaean, Danaan, Hellenes:** all alternate names for the Greeks.

### TROJANS (OR PEOPLE IN TROY)

**Andromache:** The wife of Hector – pretty much the model of a perfect wife.

**Deiphobos:** Hector's brother, impersonated by Apollo at the time of Hector's death.

**Hecuba:** Hector's mother, Priam's wife.

**Hector:** Troy's chief warrior, the foundation of their ability to survive the Greek assault. Good in combat and in council, an admirable and loving husband, father and son, aware of the requirements of honor, realistic about the probable outcome of the war.

**Helen:** The most beautiful woman in Greece. When she was of marriageable age, every king in Greece wanted her, and her father made all of her suitors swear to uphold the marital rights of her husband, so that there would not be fighting over her after she was married. Aphrodite awarded her to Paris after he judged her the most beautiful of the goddesses. When he stole her from Menelaus, the oath of Tyndareus came into effect, and the Greeks gathered together for an assault on Troy. In the Iliad, the fault is regarded as entirely Paris's, except for Helen herself, who feels responsible for it all.

**Paris (aka Alexandros):** The Trojan prince who started it all by kidnapping Helen. Just as Hector is held up as the model of a hero, with the faultless god Apollo as his patron, Paris is the model of – well, the opposite, better at dancing than fighting, patronized by Aphrodite the love goddess, and depicted in bed as often as at war.

**Priam:** The aged king of Troy, father of Hector and Paris.

## GODS

**Aphrodite:** Goddess of love, patron of Helen and Paris.

**Apollo:** God of poetry, prophecy, and plague, and the patron of Hector and supporter of the Trojans

**Athena:** Goddess of wisdom and warfare, favorite daughter of Zeus, patron of Achilles in particular and the Greeks in general

**Hephaestus:** The metalsmith god, friendly toward Thetis.

**Hera:** The wife of Zeus, king of the gods; a supporter of the Greeks.

**Poseidon:** The sea-god, a supporter of the Greeks.

**Thetis:** a sea-nymph (Nereid), mother of Achilles. With her diving knowledge, she predicted that Achilles could either live to a ripe old age at home, or have a short life and eternal glory by fighting and dying at Troy.

**Zeus:** King of the gods, supporter of the Trojans but also aware of the ultimate fate of the city and of all the warriors.